

# Again, Gunmen Invade Delta Community, Kill Man, Abduct Wife

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Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

One week after one of the two persons abducted from the community by criminals was found dead near his house, unidentified gunmen have yet again attacked Issele-Azagba community in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State, killing one man, injuring his daughter and abducting his wife.

THISDAY learnt that the latest incident happened last Sunday night when the gunmen stormed the community, pumping several shots into the man whose daughter also got hit in the hand by a stray bullet.

A source from the palace of the traditional ruler of the community, HRM Francis Ijeh, told THISDAY yesterday that the gunmen operated practically unchallenged as a team of policemen only arrived in the area at about midnight, hours after the invaders had disappeared with the wife of the deceased, said to be of Urhobo ethnic group.

Vigilance groups from Issele-Azagba and the neighboring Utulu community were said to have done their best to ward off the attacks but the damage had already been done.

The injured girl was initially treated at a local clinic before being transferred to the Federal Medical Centre in Asaba for extraction of the bullet, the source said.

The attack on Sunday night was the second this month as a similar attack on the night of February 5, 2020, eventually left two men dead.

One of the deceased victims of that particular attack, an engineer, Mr. Sebastine Kadiri, was reportedly abducted on the fateful night along with a female student of a private school in the town, but the girl had regained her freedom about four days later after her parents reportedly paid a huge sum as ransom.

The Delta Police Command spokeswoman, Mrs. Onome Onovwakpoyeya, confirmed the incident to THISDAY yesterday evening.

She assured Deltans that the police were however on the trail of the criminals "in an effort to rescue the kidnapped woman."

The latest incident is coming on the heels of the reported arrest of some suspects in connection with the February 5 incident.

The suspects included a young man, who is native of Issele-Azagba, believed to be working with some criminal herdsmen terrorising the Issele-Azagba/Utulu/Akwukwu-Igbo/Issele-Uku axis of Delta North.

Nevertheless, many residents of Issele-Azagba, who had hoped peace had returned to the town, were seen fleeing the community again yesterday.

Thousands, especially women and children, had fled earlier following rumours that armed Fulani herdsmen had carried out the February 5 attack.

In October 2019, two persons, including a teacher, were killed when suspected herdsmen invaded Issele-Azagba Mixed Secondary School at about noon, abducting the principal and five other teachers and students.